N° 83. SATURDAY, *September* 2, 1786.

Continuation of the Story of Father *Nicholas.*

IN this ſtate of peaceful felicity we had lived ſomething more than a year, when my Emilia found herſelf with child. On that occaſion my anxiety was ſuch as a huſband who dotes upon his wife may be ſuppoſed to feel. In conſequence of that anxiety, I propoſed our removing for ſome weeks to *Paris*, where ſhe might have abler aſſiſtance than our province could afford in thoſe moments of danger which ſhe ſoon expected. To this ſhe objected with earneſtneſs, from a variety of motives; but moſt of my neighbours applauded my reſolution; and one, who was the nephew of a farmer-general, and had purchaſed the eſtate on which his father had been a tenant, told me, the danger from their country *accoucheurs* was ſuch, that nobody who could afford to go to Paris would think of truſting them. I was a little tender on the reproach of poverty, and abſolutely determined for the journey. To induce

my wife's consent, I had another pretext, being left executor to a friend who had died in Paris, and had effects remaining there. Emilia at last consented, and we removed to town accordingly.

For some time I scarce ever left our Hotel: It was the same at which Emilia and her father had lodged when he came to Paris to die, and leave her to my love. The recollection of those scenes, tender and interesting as they were, spread a sort of melancholy indulgence over our mutual society, by which the company of any third person could scarcely be brooked. My wife had some of those sad presages which women of her sensibility often feel in the condition she was then in. All my attention and solicitude were excited to combat her fears. "I "shall not live," she would say, "to revisit "*Santonges*: but my Henry will think of me "there: In those woods in which we have so "often walked, by that brook to the fall of "which we have listened together, and felt in "silence what language, at least what mine, "my Love, could not speak."—The good Father was overpowered by the tenderness of the images that rushed upon his mind, and tears for a moment choked his utterance. After a short space he began, with a voice faultering and weak.

—"Pardon

—"Pardon the emotion that ſtopped my recital. You pity me; but it is not always that my tears are of ſo gentle a kind; the images her ſpeech recalled ſoftened my feelings into ſorrow; but I am not worthy of them.—Hear the confeſſion of my remorſe.

The anxiety of my Emilia was at laſt diſſipated by her ſafe delivery of a boy; and on this object of a new kind of tenderneſs we gazed with inexpreſſible delight. Emilia ſuckled the infant herſelf, as well from the idea of duty and of pleaſure in tending it, as from the difficulty of finding in Paris a nurſe to be truſted. We propoſed returning to the country as ſoon as the re-eſtabliſhment of her ſtrength would permit: Mean time, during her hours of reſt, I generally went out to finiſh the buſineſs which the truſt of my deceaſed friend had devolved upon me.

In paſſing through the *Thuilleries*, in one of thoſe walks, I met my old companion *Delaſerre*. He embraced me with a degree of warmth which I ſcarce expected from my knowledge of his diſpoſition, or the length of time for which our correſpondence had been broke off. He had heard, he ſaid, accidentally of my being in town, but had ſought me for ſeveral days in vain. In truth, he was of all men one whom I was the moſt afraid of meeting. I had heard

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in the country of his unbounded diſſipation and extravagance; and there were ſome ſtories to his prejudice which were only not believed, from an unwillingneſs to believe them in people whom the corruptions of the world had not familiariſed to baſeneſs; yet I found he ſtill poſſeſſed a kind of ſuperiority over my mind, which I was glad to excuſe, by forcing myſelf to think him leſs unworthy than he was reported. After a variety of inquiries, and expreſſing his cordial ſatisfaction at the preſent happineſs I enjoyed, he preſſed me to ſpend that evening with him ſo earneſtly, that though I had made it a ſort of rule to be at home, I was aſhamed to offer an apology, and agreed to meet him at the hour he appointed.

Our company conſiſted only of Delaſerre himſelf, and two other officers, one a good deal older than any of us, who had the croſs of St. Louis, and the rank of Colonel, whom I thought the moſt agreeable man I had ever met with. The unwillingneſs with which I had left home, and the expectation of a very different ſort of party where I was going, made me feel the preſent one doubly pleaſant. My ſpirits, which were rather low when I went in, from that conſtraint I was prepared for, roſe in proportion to the pleaſantry around me, and the perfect eaſe in which I found myſelf with this

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old officer, who had information, wit, ſentiment, every thing I valued moſt, and every thing I leaſt expected in a ſociety ſelected by *Delaſerre*. It was late before we parted; and at parting I received, not without pleaſure, an invitation from the Colonel to ſup with him the evening after.

The company at his houſe I found enlivened by his ſiſter and a friend of hers, a widow, who, though not a perfect beauty, had a countenance that impreſſed one much more in her favour than mere beauty could. When ſilent, there was a certain ſoftneſs in it infinitely bewitching; and when it was lightened up by the expreſſion which her converſation gave, it was equally attractive. We happened to be placed next each other. Unuſed as I was to the little gallantries of faſhionable life, I rather wiſhed than hoped to make myſelf agreeable to her. She ſeemed, however, intereſted in my attentions and converſation, and in hers I found myſelf flattered at the ſame time and delighted. We played, againſt the inclination of this Lady and me, and we won rather more than I wiſhed. Had I been as rich as Delaſerre, I ſhould have objected to the deepneſs of the ſtakes: but we were the only perſons of the company that ſeemed uneaſy at our ſucceſs, and we parted with the moſt cordial good humour. *Madame de Trenville* (that

was the widow's name), ſmiling to the Colonel, aſked him to take his revenge at her houſe, and ſaid, with an air of equal modeſty and frankneſs, that as I had been the partner of her ſucceſs, ſhe hoped for the honour of my company, to take the chance of ſharing a leſs favourable fortune.

At firſt my wife had expreſſed her ſatisfaction at my finding amuſement in ſociety, to relieve the duty of attending her. But when my abſence grew very frequent, as indeed I was almoſt every day at Madame de Trenville's, tho' her words continued the ſame, ſhe could not help expreſſing by her countenance her diſſatiſfaction at my abſence. I perceived this at firſt with tenderneſs only, and next evening excuſed myſelf from keeping my engagement. But I found my wife's company not what it uſed to be: thoughtful, but afraid to truſt one another with our thoughts, Emilia ſhewed her uneaſineſs in her looks, and I covered mine but ill with an aſſumed gaiety of appearance.

The day following Delaſerre called, and ſaw Emilia for the firſt time. He rallied me gently for breaking my laſt night's appointment, and told me of another which he had made for me, which my wife inſiſted on my keeping. Her couſin applauded her conduct, and joked on the good government of wives. Before I went out

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in the evening, I came to wiſh Emilia good night. I thought I perceived a tear on her cheek, and would have ſtaid, but for the ſhame of not going. The company perceived my want of gaiety, and Delaſerre was merry on the occaſion. Even my friend the Colonel threw in a little raillery on the ſubject of marriage. 'Twas the firſt time I felt ſomewhat awkward at being the only married man of the party.

We played deeper and ſat later than formerly; but I was to ſhew myſelf not afraid of my wife, and objected to neither. I loſt conſiderably, and returned home mortified and chagrined. I ſaw Emilia next morning, whoſe ſpirits were not high. Methought her looks reproached my conduct, and I was enough in the wrong to be angry that they did ſo. Delaſerre came to take me to his houſe to dinner. He obſerved as we went, that Emilia looked ill. "Going to the country will re-eſtabliſh her," ſaid I.—"Do you leave Paris?" ſaid he.—"In "a few days."—"Had I ſuch motives for re-"maining in it as you have."—"What mo-"tives?"—"The attachment of ſuch friends; "but friendſhip is a cold word: the attachment "of ſuch a woman as *de Trenville*." I know not how I looked, but he preſſed the ſubject no farther; perhaps I was leſs offended than I ought to have been.

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We went to that Lady's houſe after dinner. She was dreſſed moſt elegantly, and looked more beautiful than ever I had ſeen her. The party was more numerous than uſual, and there was more vivacity in it. The converſation turned upon my intention of leaving Paris; the ridicule of country-manners, of country-opinions, of the inſipidity of country-enjoyments, was kept up with infinite ſpirit by Delaſerre, and moſt of the younger members of the company. Madame de Trenville did not join in their mirth, and ſometimes looked at me as if the ſubject was too ſerious for her to be merry on. I was half aſhamed and half ſorry that I was going to the country; leſs uneaſy than vain at the preference that was ſhewn me.

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